



NEWS RELEASE

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WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FORMER SCHOOL EMPLOYEE PLEADS GUILTY TO HACKING INTO DISTRICT'S COMPUTER SYSTEM

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced today that a former employee of the Northeast Nodaway R-V School District pleaded guilty in federal court today to hacking into the district's computer system.

Henry Curtis Underwood, 33, of Bloomington, Ill., pleaded guilty before U.S. Magistrate Judge Robert E. Larsen this afternoon to the charge contained in a Nov. 17, 2005, federal indictment.

Underwood was employed as the district's technology coordinator, but had been placed on administrative leave at the time of the offense. Graves explained that **Underwood** had been convicted of bank robbery in 1995 in federal court in Texas and sentenced to five years and three months in federal prison. But **Underwood** did not reveal his criminal history in his job application.

In the course of investigating a \$200 theft from the Parnell Elementary School in December 2004, a Nodaway County Deputy Sheriff uncovered **Underwood's** bank robbery conviction. **Underwood** was placed on administrative leave on Jan. 27, 2005, and the next day sent an instant message to the principal at Parnell Elementary saying that he could not understand why he was accused of taking the missing money. On Saturday, Jan. 29, 2005, while working in her office, the principal was abruptly logged off her school computer and she could not log back on. An investigation revealed that only two accounts were still functioning, the "cunderwood" account and the "Administrator" account. All other accounts on the school district's network had been disabled and could not be accessed, and all computer work stations at both Parnell Elementary and Ravenwood High School had been disabled.

At the time Underwood was suspended, school district officials were unaware he had provided himself with remote access to the district's computer network through a Virtual Private

Network. Underwood had established a VPN link from his home, using a laptop computer, to the Ravenwood school.

By pleading guilty today, **Underwood** admitted that he established a remote connection to the district's computer system on Jan. 29, 2005. **Underwood** used the unauthorized access to initiate a program that locked out or disabled every user of the system with the exception of the account "cunderwood" and the administrator's account.

The Jan. 29, 2005, computer intrusion was highly disruptive of the operations of the school district, Graves said. Full access to the system was not restored until March 2005. The school district has incurred more than \$7,000 in direct remediation costs in the form of payments to consultants to repair the network and reestablish account access.

Under federal statutes, **Underwood** could be subject to a sentence of up to 10 years in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$250,000 and an order of restitution. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Curt Bohling. The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow/index.html